

For Immediate Release

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*Washington, D.C.*-- Today, Congressman Sires reintroduced H.R. 260, the Commute LESS (Leveraging Employer Support and Successes) Act, to assist commuters in finding alternative ways to travel to work.

“Often commuters drive alone to work because they feel that they have no choice – in 2007, commuters who drove alone traveled over 750 billion miles, consumed 148 million gallons of gas, and emitted over 1.4 millions of carbon dioxide each day,” said Congressman Sires. “This legislation will provide a solution to better connect employers and transportation planners.”

Commute LESS will create an employer advisory council to draft commute trip reduction plans and will encourage metropolitan planning organizations to draft commuter trip reduction suggestions in their transportation plans. A formula grant program to local, state, and regional entities will create and expand commuter benefit programs. Additionally, sponsors of large projects will be required to submit congestion mitigation plans.

A 2008 study conducted by BusinessWeek Research Services found that nearly one in five employees who drove a car and then signed up for tax-free commuter benefits began commuting by mass transit. The same study found that fifty-three percent of employees whose companies do not offer tax-free commuter benefits would participate in a program if it were offered. These benefits would include the options of carpooling, telecommuting, biking, or creating alternative schedules.

“As the Representative of four of the top five most densely populated incorporated places in the nation, I understand firsthand the issues that commuters face,” said Sires. “This legislation will provide commuters with real options to have more flexible work hours, conserve fuel, and reduce congestion.”

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